

Harper Center Bulletin

April 2014 Newsletter

Yes, we have arrived in April and my intent was to talk about the flowers and the bees and the Yankees chances of finishing ahead of the Red Sox but I guess all that has been overshadowed in recent days by the collapse of Northern Berkshire Health and the possible closing of the North Adams Regional Hospital. I doubt that there are many people unconcerned by this event and I'm pretty sure that not too many of us even thought this would happen like this. Oh, we all knew that there were periodic problems up on the hill, there have been enough cash flow warnings emanating from there during the last few years so I'm not totally surprised. I'm quite certain that there has been a Herculean effort to stay afloat and we've had NBH representatives here in this building recently to discuss the state of affairs up there. I just never thought that it would happen so abruptly and without warning.

This is a terrible tragedy and it's hurting everyone. A very large and vital piece of our community is in trouble and it's a time for solutions. So let's work together and figure this out right? I can tell you that we're talking about our options including transportation to Pittsfield and Bennington. The problem at the moment is that we just don't know the extent of the problem. When all the balls fall, we'll know exactly what we have to do and for whom. At the present, there are just too many in the air but we're evaluating the potential and we'll respond when we're needed. Please be patient!



The Williamstown
Council on Aging

The Harper Center,
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We're open from 8:00 to
4:00 Monday through
Friday.

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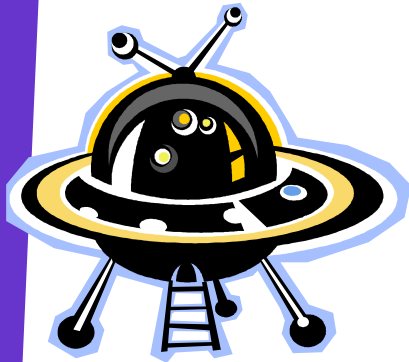
What we know...

If you had a procedure scheduled at the Hospital, your provider will be calling you to reschedule.

Berkshire Medical Center has set up a 24/7 service for people to ask questions about care-855.262.5465. A similar number has been set up at the Southwestern Vermont Medical Center-Bennington-802.447.5007

We know that Berkshire Health Systems have stepped in to try to keep the ER and other practices associated with NBH afloat. We don't yet know about the VNA or the Wound Clinic-we'll certainly hear soon I'm sure. In the meanwhile we hope for the best. Our thoughts are with our friends from the hill today.

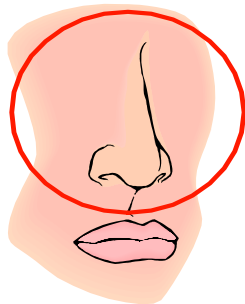
Crop Circles



So, really, what are these crop circles that we hear about from time to time? You're watching TV and in the middle of a news broadcast there is a segment with an obviously unhappy farmer pointing to his cornfield where something or someone has made an elaborate and sometimes unexplainable series of circles in the middle of the crops. You sometimes have to look at them from the air to really appreciate the size and occasional beauty of these things. The question is always there waiting to be asked; what causes this phenomenon? People or gasp! little green men?

At 1:00 on Friday April 4th, our friend John Root will be in the house to talk about this phenomenon appearing with increasing frequency and sophistication in farmers fields all over the world. He'll cover the actual manifestations as well as effects on humans, animals, soils and electronic disturbances and we'll speculate as to why these manifestations occur. Elder Services will be serving baked fish, salad and sides that day so call Pat and join us for lunch too!

Aroma therapy



The Nose

Our new friend, Jessica Spring from Sweetbrook-she's the Admissions Director over there and is our new Blood Pressure Nurse-some of you guys have met her, is coming on Tuesday April 15th to do a presentation on aromatherapy. Aromatherapy is a form of alternative medicine using plant compounds, called essential oils, to alter a persons mood, cognition, health, etc. She'll talk about the use of oils for clinical purposes, beauty treatments and pleasure. You'll be making bath salts for fun during the presentation. She'll also have printed materials to read after the show. Jessica will be talking at 12:30 but we'll put another familiar smell-pizza- in the air first at noon. Watch for the sign up!

Medicare etc...



Ah, there's always stuff happening in the insurance world isn't there? Just when you think you know it all, something or someone else pops up. In this case it's a nurse from Health New England named Lee Jaggi who wants to come and talk with us in Williamstown. So he'll be talking about Medicare, Masshealth and Medicare supplemental insurances. My friend Erica at the Adams COA has highly recommended him and says that he's a wonderful presenter who brings coffee and lots of goodies, including food.

OK, so we'll be hosting Mr. Jaggi on Thursday afternoon April 10th at 2:00. It's an unusual time for us but it will give you time to digest lunch before we snack!

Special Days

Williamstown has had many, many special days thru the years and a few of us have seen a whole bunch of them. We've had 260 years of history and in that time the town has seen a lot. You folks know Sarah Currie, the Director of the Williamstown Historical Museum, right? Anyway, she and I were talking about parties and fun days and suddenly it occurred to us that this would be a good topic for a program here at Harper. Remember fireworks on the Fourth of July across the street at the school field?

How about scout jamborees over there? Parades? Memorial Day observations? Spring Street Block parties? The 200 and 250 birthday celebrations for the Town itself? Yes, all good stuff. And pleasant times are worth remembering aren't they?

So let's get together on Tuesday April 29th, have a cookout-what's a special day without a cookout -and share our recollections of special days gone by here in Williamstown. Maybe we'll even whip out a camera and record them so they're not lost forever. We'll put out a sign up sheet in a couple days in the usual space.



Kira and eggs

Our friend Kira from Amedisys will be in the house again on Thursday April 17 to host a fun program built around a familiar Easter time activity; making painted Easter Eggs. Oh, she'll be bringing the hard boiled eggs, the paints, all the "stuff" necessary to create an edible work of art. Oh, I did say edible, you need to eat these things before, well, don't leave them in the candy basket for 3 weeks. They get a bit funny if you do. But they're fun to make, and even more fun to eat. This event is all about fun though, right? So join us on the 17th at 1:00, there will be appropriate snacks and you'll go home with an edible gift to refrigerate and give to someone for Easter. Or eat before then which would be my option...



D-Day approaches

Our free AARP tax aide program is in full gear and cruising along, a precision machine! It has been an excellent season so far, we've met and helped a whole group of people, some regular customers and others new faces. But as with all good things, will soon end for the year. There are only five sessions remaining for us to help file your 2013 state and federal taxes—the last day is April 15 and we all know what that means. So, if you need a little help, gather you pertinent paperwork for 2013, your 2012 returns and call us to reserve a spot -458.8250. This program is open to folks of any age and moderate means. Time is flying so don't miss your chance to get your taxes done for free.



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You can also find us on the Williamstown Municipal website at www.williamstown.net and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/williamstowncouncilonaging

A couple program changes to note;

We'll not offer Sunday lunches in the foreseeable future.

The food was produced in the kitchen at the NARH and whether that arrangement can be recovered is not known at the moment. We'll definitely look to do Sunday programming, probably cookouts during the summer, but the future of the Sunday sit-down is a blur at the moment.

Java with Judy will move to a new date and time starting in May- Java Judy Bombardier accepted a new position with the Multiple Sclerosis folks out of North Adams and will be by with her new employer to see us in May-watch for her announcement!

Bonny DiTomasso from Elder Services will be here on Monday evening April 28th to conduct a pre retirement seminar. Her program will run from 5:00 to 7:00 and we'll post more details when we have them.

Finally the Aladdin's will be here at Harper on Thursday afternoon, April 24th to entertain us-we'll have mini-dogs as a snack, What do you think!

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Our foot care magician, Serena Merrill, will be in the house on Tuesday April 15th to work wonders on your feet, clipping nails, reducing calluses and massaging the soreness out. Unfortunately, the April dates are filled and she's currently accepting appointments for May and June.

For those of you who have found yourselves to be challenged by the very technical stuff which comprises our health care insurance paperwork system, our health care insurance guru, SHINE Counselor Peg Jenks, will be in the house on Wednesday April 16 at 10:30 to help. Appointments are not necessary but appreciated; Peg is also available for individual consultation outside of normal hours by contacting us in the COA office at 458-8250.

The monthly Blood Pressure Clinic, now officially sponsored by our friends from Sweetbrook, will take place on Tuesday April 8th, at noon immediately preceding the Friendship Club meeting. "Our" nurse, Jessica Spring came to see us for the first time in March and is looking forward to meeting all of you. Stop by, say hi and get those numbers read! She'll be here twice next month.

Finally, the monthly Brown Bag, sponsored by the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts will be at Harper for pick up or delivery on Friday April 25th. Brown Bag is literally a brown paper sack filled with shelf stable foods and fresh fruits and veggies in season. Interested? Contact us here at Harper at 458-8250, and we'll help you thru the minimal applications process!